

MLA/2012/00122/10

MMO Licence Application

Variation Request 10 OPEN

Request Date

14-DEC-2020

Requested By

Sarah Lister

Licence(s) to be varied

L/2013/00303/8 (Marine Licence)

What would you like to vary about your current licence(s)/response(s)?

For Blyth Offshore Demonstrator (BOD) Project Phase 2 works, EDF Renewables proposes to vary the marine licence (L/2013/00303/8) and Section 36 consent (MLA/2012/00122/3) for the extension of the Rochdale Envelope to include construction and operation of up to 5 wind turbines on floating support structures. The proposed variations for Phase 2 works only relate to the build out at Array 4 in combination with the operational Array 2. Array 3a will not be developed under this consent variation and the assessments undertaken within this document only relate to the proposed Phase 2 works at Array 4. The variation to be proposed to the current design envelope to facilitate Phase 2 relates to the following aspects of the design to be included in the Section 36 and marine licence;

- Floating foundations (up to 5 semi-submersible or barge type platforms);
- Increased turbine size (four turbines of up to 258 m to tip or five turbines of up to 222 m to tip); and
- Increased turbine capacity (up to 14 MW).

The application to vary the marine licence and Section 36 consent has already been screened (EIA/2020/00026) by the MMO who concluded in their Opinion (27 November 2020) that the proposed works is screened out of requiring an EIA under the Electricity Works and Marine Works EIA Regulations.

Why would you like to vary your licence(s)/response(s) in this way?

EDF proposes this variation due to significant development in floating wind technology in recent years and appropriate routes to market opening up for demonstrator scale projects in this sector. The purpose of the BOD Phase 2 project at Array 4 is to test and demonstrate developing and innovative technologies that could be utilised on future commercial scale projects, including potential testing of turbine foundations. While a Rochdale Envelope was employed for the original application, future variations to the marine licence were always anticipated. This consenting approach is particularly necessary when looking at new and innovative technologies where design principals and associated impacts are not fully understood.

Floating offshore wind concepts differ in the technical and engineering challenges they face in comparison to fixed, however they have far more flexibility in terms of water depth in which they can be deployed, have different drivers in terms of selecting appropriate locations (not as reliant on underlying geology) and present different environmental impacts in some topic areas. These factors mean that areas of the UK that have not seen significant deployment of offshore wind to date could be now be considered suitable for floating offshore wind development. This will allow for geographic diversity of future offshore wind development sites as the UK aims towards net zero climate targets and targets to reach 40 GW of offshore wind by 2030. These aspirations will be more readily achievable and environmentally sustainable through the deployment of floating wind projects.

Furthermore, the industry and developers within this sector are keen to demonstrate that floating wind is cost competitive in shallower waters, where environmental sensitivities or ground conditions may limit the deployment of fixed foundation offshore wind. These points have been recognised by the Department for Business, Environment and Industry Strategy (BEIS) who have proposed a route to market for floating wind projects through the Contract or Difference (CfD) mechanism in waters deeper than 45m. With routes to leasing for commercial scale sites via the ScotWind leasing process which commenced in mid-2020, EDF would like to utilise the demonstration attributes of the BOD site to build out an array of floating turbines in order to support further development of the technology, facilitate development of UK supply chains and prove floating concepts in shallower waters.

What date would the varied licence(s)/response(s) come into effect?

01-MAR-2021